

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves gave a presentation on the security of NATO and Europe in the 21st century, at the Atlantic Council - an influential foreign and security policy think-tank and policy centre.

President Ilves emphasised that the successful operation in Afghanistan and restraining terrorism in general, the resolution of Iran's nuclear problems, contributing to the success and stability of the Balkans and South Caucasian countries, co-ordinated efforts in fighting cyber crime, and relations with China, which is becoming more and more influence, serve the interests of all of us – the European Union, NATO, and the United States of America.

Estonia participates in solving a number of issues, said President Ilves, as he emphasised the service of our defence force members and civilian experts in Afghanistan, Estonia's contribution in the Balkans and South Caucasus, and the work done at the NATO Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn.

“These are our shared challenges,” said the Estonian Head of State. “However, while giving these issues the main focus, Europe hopes that the United States of America will continue to see the importance of trans-Atlantic relations, as democratic countries can only cope with global problems through joint efforts, understanding, and support of each other.”

Strong Trans-Atlantic relations will show the world our sense of responsibility, as was the case during the second half of the 20th century when we opposed threats from the Soviet Union,” said President Ilves, adding: “This is when the foreign policy strengths of the United States of America became obvious – the skill to resolve international problems.”

The Estonian Head of State also emphasised the need for co-operation and close co-ordination in the foreign and security policy issues of NATO and the European Union.

“There must be much more co-operation than we see today,” he underlined.

According to President Ilves, Estonia believes strongly that “the expansion of the European Union and the open-door policy, as pursued by NATO, must continue, although we do understand that this is more complicated than ever.”